

U.S. Department of Education
2013 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program
A Non-Public School - 13PV126

	Charter	Title 1	Magnet	Choice
School Type (Public Schools):	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Name of Principal: Mrs. Darlene Braun

Official School Name: St. Joseph School

School Mailing Address: 210 E. Broadway
Pierre, SD 57501-2299

County: Hughes State School Code Number*: 3230300

Telephone: (605) 224-7185 E-mail: Darlene.Braun@k12.sd.us

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I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that all information is accurate.

(Principal's Signature) Date _____

Name of Superintendent*: Father Michael Griffin Superintendent e-mail: ssppchur@parishmail.com

District Name: Saints Peter & Paul Parish School District Phone: (605) 988-3766

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that it is accurate.

(Superintendent's Signature) Date _____

Name of School Board President/Chairperson: Mr. Jon Bierne

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature) Date _____

**Non-Public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and emailed to Aba Kumi, Director, National Blue Ribbon Schools (Aba.Kumi@ed.gov) or mailed by expedited mail or a courier mail service (such as Express Mail, FedEx or UPS) to Aba Kumi, Director, National Blue Ribbon Schools Program, Office of Communications and Outreach, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Room 5E103, Washington, DC 20202-8173.

PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

The signatures on the first page of this application certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) or its equivalent each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
3. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's AYP requirement or its equivalent in the 2012-2013 school year. Meeting AYP or its equivalent must be certified by the state. Any AYP status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum and a significant number of students in grades 7 and higher must take foreign language courses.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2007 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for that period.
6. The nominated school has not received the Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011 or 2012.
7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's application and/or rescind a school's award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

All data are the most recent year available.

DISTRICT

Questions 1 and 2 are for Public Schools only.

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SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located: Small city or town in a rural area

4. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 8

5. Number of students as of October 1, 2012 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	19	11	30
1	7	20	27
2	8	20	28
3	12	10	22
4	12	11	23
5	11	11	22
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12	0	0	0
Total in Applying School:			152

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: 2 % American Indian or Alaska Native
2 % Asian
1 % Black or African American
3 % Hispanic or Latino
0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
90 % White
2 % Two or more races
100 % Total

Only the seven standard categories should be used in reporting the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2011-2012 school year: 1%
This rate is calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

Step	Description	Value
(1)	Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2011 until the end of the school year.	0
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2011 until the end of the school year.	1
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	1
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2011	141
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.01
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	1

8. Percent of English Language Learners in the school: 0%
Total number of ELL students in the school: 0
Number of non-English languages represented: 0
Specify non-English languages:

9. Percent of students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 5%

Total number of students who qualify: 8

If this method does not produce an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families, or the school does not participate in the free and reduced-priced school meals program, supply an accurate estimate and explain how the school calculated this estimate.

10. Percent of students receiving special education services: 10%

Total number of students served: 16

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional categories.

<u>0</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>0</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>4</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>12</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>0</u> Mental Retardation	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed

11. Indicate number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below:

	<u>Full-Time</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>
Administrator(s)	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>8</u>	<u>3</u>
Resource teachers/specialists (e.g., reading specialist, media specialist, art/music, PE teachers, etc.)	<u>0</u>	<u>2</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
Support staff (e.g., school secretaries, custodians, cafeteria aides, etc.)	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
Total number	<u>12</u>	<u>9</u>

12. Average school student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the Full Time Equivalent of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1:

17:1

13. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Daily student attendance	97%	97%	97%	98%	97%
High school graduation rate	%	%	%	%	%

14. **For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools):**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2012.

Graduating class size: _____

Enrolled in a 4-year college or university _____%

Enrolled in a community college _____%

Enrolled in vocational training _____%

Found employment _____%

Military service _____%

Other _____%

Total _____**0%**

15. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award:

☒ No

☐ Yes

If yes, what was the year of the award?

PART III - SUMMARY

St. Joseph School is located at 210 E. Broadway in Pierre, SD and has been in operation since 1958. St. Peter and Paul Catholic Church opened the school because the parish believed that God belongs in the classroom. The school is open to children of any ethnic race and religious preference, no child is turned away due to inability to pay tuition. The enrollment average for the last five years is 148 students in kindergarten through fifth grade. In the last five years the population of students who are not Catholic increased from zero to 15 percent.

St. Joseph School is dedicated to providing a Christ-centered education that allows all students to grow in their faith and acquire the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes to become life-long learners and productive Christian citizens with a constant focus on the Kingdom of God.

The St. Joseph School community believes in the sacredness of the parental vocation. Therefore, staff works cooperatively with parents in the education of their children. Parents understand and support the school's mission and are given the opportunity to assist in achieving the mission. Teachers stay in contact with parents through a class website, daily assignment books, and e-mail. Parents are required to attend Parent-Teacher Conferences twice a year. Each spring they complete a survey which covers academics, discipline, climate, student interactions, and the physical campus. Overall, they continually rate the school quite high, revealing their satisfaction of all aspects of the school, staff, and quality of the education.. This survey also allows them to write comments and constructive criticism.

An active Home and School Association supports the staff and students. This association meets seven months of the school year. During the meetings the parents have the opportunity to visit with the teachers and spend time in the classrooms. The association plans and conducts many major fund raisers throughout the year. They also provide treats for special events and help to fund school assemblies and/ or field trips.

The staff believes each child is a special gift from God. Therefore, each individual's uniqueness must be respected and each student must be encouraged to reach their greatest potential. Likewise, the students are expected to respect and encourage each other. This supportive environment is established through teaching character education and adhering to the school-wide discipline plan. Children are referred to as Kids of Christ, a constant reminder of the expectations for behavior. Social skills are taught at the beginning of the year and each month a different Fruit of the Spirit is the focal point of school-wide discussions on behavior.

The entire community believes the learning process must be a challenging, joyous venture as well as an act of love. The staff believes that each student is important and can attain mastery of the essential content and be challenged to move beyond. They believe no child should be left behind and accept responsibility for each student's learning. The average class size is 17 students, allowing for more individualized attention and greater opportunity for the staff to nurture the students and help them learn to respect, accept, and embrace each other's differences.

Service to others is a strong focus at St. Joseph School. The students and families work on a service project each month, reaching out to others in the community, state, and nation. Children must be taught early in life to be generous in order to be Christian citizens in adulthood.

Instilling faith and assisting children in developing a loving relationship with Jesus is a priority at the school. Religion is taught daily and is enhanced with attendance at mass twice week; monthly Fruit of the Spirit assemblies; classroom prayer tables; morning announcements which include a short synopsis of the

daily gospel reading; grouping an older child with a younger one to pray together; and school-wide planned activities for Advent, Lent, Holy Days, and Catholic Schools Week.

The staff consists of eight full-time and five part-time teachers, three have their Masters and two are working on the Math Specialist degree. One of the teachers was selected South Dakota's 2008 Mathematics Teacher of the Year.

PART IV - INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. Assessment Results:

Students in grades three, four, and five at St. Joseph School are administered the Dakota STEP annually. The Dakota Step is South Dakota's state assessment. It assesses the students' achievement of the South Dakota Academic Content Standards in Reading, Mathematics and Science.

The South Dakota Department of Education has defined four levels of student achievement which are:

Advanced: Children performing at the advanced level exceed expectations for that grade. These children are able to perform the content standards for the grade at a high level of difficulty, complexity, and fluency.

Proficient: Children performing at the proficient level meet the expectations for that grade. They are able to perform the content standards for the grade at the level of difficulty, complexity, and fluency specified by the standards.

Basic: Children performing at the basic level perform below expectations for that grade. They are able to perform some of the content standards for that grade level below the level of difficulty, complexity and fluency specified by the grade level standards.

Below basic: Children performing below the basic level are unable to perform the content standards.

St. Joseph School staff strongly believes that all children have the ability to learn and to be successful. Therefore, the goal is to have ALL students perform at the proficient or advanced level.

The overall average of the percentage of students scoring proficient and advanced in both Reading and Mathematics for the last five years is consistently at least 90 %. This is well above South Dakota's averages which are about 77 % for both subjects. In 2011/2012, St. Joseph students' overall average in Reading was 91% compared to the state's 76%. St. Joseph School's overall average in Math last spring was 94% compared to the state's average of 76%.

The percentage of St. Joseph School fifth grade students scoring proficient or advanced in Mathematics dropped slightly in 2010. This is attributed to the instructor just becoming familiar with inquiry-based learning and teaching. The third grade students scoring proficient and advance throughout the five year span stays fairly steady in the 80% range. In an effort to raise the third grade scores, a teacher with extensive training in South Dakota Counts, a statewide initiative designed to improve math achievement, is now teaching second grade math. Hopefully, this will give all students the strong foundation they need for success.

Last spring, with the exception of third grade math, the percentage of students scoring advanced was at least 40% for each grade in Reading and Math. The staff believes that if children are to be prepared to meet the challenges of the Common Core Standards the percentage of children scoring advanced will need to continue to rise.

2. Using Assessment Results:

The Dakota STEP results are used to evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum and the progress of each St. Joseph School student. The entire staff meets before school starts each year to analyze the assessment data from the previous spring. Fortunately, the state provides data for each specific standard, each grade,

and each individual student. The staff identifies the particular standards of concern for Reading, Mathematics and Science. Once these standards are identified, committees are formed to research proven techniques which can be implemented to ensure that all students are proficient. The committees gather the necessary resources and provide professional development throughout the year to all teachers. Teachers also study the individual student results. These results enable teachers to provide enrichment activities for the students who are proficient or advanced and to give extra attention to and modify instruction for those who need extra help with specific standards. Adult tutors are utilized, when needed, to work with the proficient and advanced students while the teacher works with small groups of children who require more direct instruction.

Collaboration is the key to effective teaching. The standards that are identified for school-wide improvement are points of discussion at monthly teachers' meetings. Teachers share lessons and techniques that are successful and ask for direction for those the lessons that did not achieve the desired results.

Although the primary grades do not take the state assessment, it is essential that these teachers participate in the entire process of data review and improvement because it is imperative that students receive a strong foundation in the primary grades. The stronger the foundation the more successful the students are as they move forward.

Throughout the year, all reading teachers rely on DIBELS, DRA, Reading and Writing Project, and many formative and summative assessments to monitor their students' progress. The scores on the assessments assist in ensuring students are reading books at their level, determine their flexible reading group, deciding the interventions needed, and documenting each child's progress. Math teachers use IXL, assessments designed by Kathy Richardson, and many formative and summative assessments to monitor progress and design instruction.

Portfolios are used to document students' progress. Teachers keep examples of different pieces of work which reflect the ability of the child at the beginning, middle, and end of each year. Also included in the portfolios are the assessment results and any record keeping the teacher has.

Communicating Assessment Results:

School-wide and individual Dakota STEP Assessment results are mailed home shortly before the first Parent-Teacher Conference in September. The student's individual report provides parents with a clear explanation of their child's strengths and weaknesses, including performance levels, scale scores, and raw scores. Parents are encouraged to study the results and ask questions during the conference time. Their child's present and prior teachers are both available during this time. The school-wide results are sent home at the same time to inform the parents of the percentage of students at each grade scoring proficient and advanced.

The school-wide results are published in the church bulletin, displayed in the church foyer year round, and are available on the school's website. Information is also provided to the local newspaper.

Teachers send home mid-term grades and stay in touch with parents through a daily assignment book and e-mails. Report cards are sent home on a quarterly basis. Kindergarten has a standard-based report card; first and second graders receive E (excellent), S (satisfactory), I (improving), N (needs to improve); and third through fifth receive letter grades based on percentages-100-94 is an A, 93-87 a B, 86-78 a C, 77-70 a D and anything lower is failing.

3. Sharing Lessons Learned:

Each year the principal attends a three day retreat and quarterly meetings with other principals throughout the Diocese. The meetings are generally times to share successes and seek advice and assistance when needed. St. Joseph School's administration encourages the staff to attend meetings and professional development opportunities. Teachers are allowed to and encouraged to attend at least three professional development opportunities each year, are reimbursed for all expenses, and during the summer are also provided a stipend. Those teachers who attend an in-service are required to share with the staff what they learned. This way everyone benefits! While away, teachers eagerly share the successes of St. Joseph School with both private and public school teachers.

At different times South Dakota Department of Education provides teachers with the opportunity to assist with projects pertaining to the state standards and the Common Core Standards. Several members of the staff have assisted with many of these important projects. Most recently, two teachers worked on the Common Core Curriculum Curation Project. Once again, this is a wonderful opportunity for teachers to share the successes of the school.

One of the teachers was selected South Dakota's 2008 Mathematics Teacher of the Year. She presented many sessions to educators across the state on the value of using Cognitive Guided Instruction.

The school has a reputation for excellence in education and because of this teachers from surrounding schools periodically come to observe.

The city newspaper periodically publishes the service projects the students perform. The radio station provides us with free spots during Catholic School Week to bring awareness of the students' academic achievement, service projects, and exemplary social skills to the community. Weekly articles in the church bulletin inform the readers about the students' achievements, projects, and learning experiences.

Each teacher has a web page where weekly activities and learning objectives are made public.

4. Engaging Families and Communities:

St. Joseph School has a very active parent association. The group meets monthly during the school year to bring families together to share parenting tips, to become acquainted and plan fund raisers. Every other month the classrooms are open for parents to visit and become better acquainted with the teacher. The association provides room parents who organize parties and find volunteers when necessary. Each February the association hosts a school carnival which the public is invited to attend.

The children present a Christmas Pageant and a spring concert which are both open to and well attended by the public.

The school has an open door policy. Parents may visit the classroom any time; many enjoy coming to eat school lunch with their child.

The church provides almost 50 percent of the school budget. Therefore, the parish members are interested in the test scores, accomplishments of individual students and teachers, and the activities at the school. Once a week many parishioners join us for All School Mass. The school children willing serve at funerals and love to assist with the yearly Christmas tea we invite parishioners to attend.

The children work on a service project each month. Recent project include collecting food for the community banquet, the Backpack Program and a domestic shelter; coats, hats, mittens, and scarves for the needy, toys and grooming items to South Dakota Social Service, books for the needy, Angel tree items, food and toys for the humane society, quarters for quake victims, and prayers for whomever needs them. Activities like these are very appreciated throughout the community.

The staff utilizes the South Dakota Discovery Center staff. They come to the school and teach particular lessons, provide field trip opportunities, and loan the school innovative Science and Math kits. In turn, their staff uses the school building free of charge when running special after school classes like Legos and robotics.

St. Joseph School was the pilot school for the Harvest of the Month, a program which introduces children to healthy fruits and vegetables and encourages healthy eating. This year the program went state-wide.

PART V - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Curriculum:

Presently, the curriculum at St. Joseph School is driven by the South Dakota State Standards with intentional focus on the Common Core State Standards. The school offers departmentalized instruction in grades 2-5. Teachers are hired determined on their expertise and interest in either Math or Language Arts.

The School Board believes the quality of education is greatly enhanced when an instructor does not have to plan for five subjects. The teachers realize the value of inquiry-based learning. Therefore, they are gradually moving away from the conventional textbooks and creating standard-based lessons around the children's interests and real world problems. The lessons are student-centered with the teacher acting as a facilitator of learning. All students are actively involved in constructing their own knowledge through integrated units, projects, group work, partner work, and hands-on learning.

Religion: The Religion program is gospel-based and focuses on the belief that we are all on a journey with God, guided by the Holy Spirit with Jesus being the role-model. Faith development is enriched through prayer, mass attendance, and the sacraments.

Language Arts: Language Arts instruction focuses on teaching students to use reading strategies, such as picture and context clues, letter and sound knowledge, phonemic and phonological awareness and word structure. Vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension are also vital to the reading program. Students spend an extended period of time reading and talking about the reading material that interests them. Writing instruction is a cyclical process which involves prewriting, creating a rough draft, editing, and publishing. Students are supported throughout the reading and writing process by both their peers and teachers.

Mathematics: The Mathematics Curriculum focuses on the eight Standards for Mathematical Practice. These include:

1. Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them
2. Reason abstractly and quantitatively
3. Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others
4. Model mathematics
5. Use appropriate tools strategically
6. Attend to precision
7. Look for and make use of structure
8. Look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning

The teachers build on each student's own mathematical thinking so that the children can make connections between situational experiences and the abstract symbols in equations. Real word problems are introduced each day and the students are given time to think, struggle, collaborate, find the solution, and defend their work.

Science: The science curriculum focuses on earth and space science, life science, physical and chemical science, energy and force and motion. Students are involved in research, investigation, experimentation, collaboration and discussion. Other areas of study, particularly mathematics and art, are integrated into the scientific learning.

Social Studies: The ultimate goal is to develop citizens who care about their community, use critical thinking skills, and consider diverse points of view. Students participate in research, discussions, and various projects.

Technology: In this technological age students must be proficient in the use of technology. The primary goal is to ensure that all students become comfortable with a wide range of computer applications and acquire basic keyboarding skills.

Physical Education and Health: The students participate in physical education three times a week for thirty minutes. PE classes promote fitness, sportsmanship, and coordination. Health and nutrition instruction encourages life-long wellness.

Art: The goal of the art program is to incite creativity and confidence in each student. Art empowers the students to see and work beyond the restraints of their everyday life. The students work with a variety of mediums.

Music: The music program provides opportunities for self-expression, creativity and esthetic awareness through appreciation, active classroom participation, creative production and performance. Students in all grades learn to read notes and to analyze and evaluate music.

Foreign Language: Foreign language is not offered at St. Joseph School. Because the school does not go beyond fifth grade it is in compliance with the program's foreign language requirements.

2. Reading/English:

Proficiency in reading is a strong indicator for success in life. Therefore, the St. Joseph staff believes Language Arts instruction needs to be designed to provide differentiated instruction that supports students in developing reading and writing proficiency. The daily lesson plan includes whole group instruction, small group instruction, and independent reading.

Whole group instruction might include letter and sound recognition, phonemic and phonological awareness, word structure, and vocabulary. During this time the teacher also selects a book, poem, or text to read aloud and models best practices in reading such as rereading for comprehension, proper fluency, making connections to text and self, making predictions and inferences, drawing conclusions, creating mental images, asking questions, and synthesizing.

During small group instruction students are ability grouped based on reading levels. The teacher selects a text for each group which targets a specific reading skill or strategy. Students gathered with the teacher generally read aloud. Guided oral reading is important to developing fluency and fluency is necessary for comprehension. The reading levels are assessed periodically to ensure the reading material provided is just right for each child. Children move into different groups on a regular basis.

Book Clubs promote fun and a love for literature. Children read a teacher-selected book and come together daily to discuss it. The book might be read silently, partner read or even taken home to read with

a family member. Discussions help students develop a deeper understanding of content, consider a different perspective, appreciate the use of figurative language, make predictions, solve problems, and strengthen vocabulary.

Independent reading time is when students choose a “just right” book to read and apply the strategies learned in whole and small group lessons. Students use post-it-notes to tag their reflections. During independent reading the teacher conferences with students to discuss their reflections and check comprehension. Each day a select number of students have time to encourage the others to read their chosen book or author.

Reading informative text is a crucial part of the teacher’s instruction. Students are exposed to a greater amount of nonfiction material as they progress through the grades. Teachers use such resources as Weekly Reader, TIME for Kids, Ranger Rick, and Sports Illustrated for Kids to help supplement interesting forms of nonfiction. Students explore vocabulary, parts of speech, main ideas, the 5 W’s (who, where, what, when, and why), and learn to use titles, headings, indexes, glossaries, etc. to better utilize the information.

Reading is taught not only during Language Arts time, but throughout the entire day. Teachers are continually referring to comprehension and fluency strategies while working within Social Studies, Science, and Math.

Undoubtedly, developing children’s interest and pleasure in reading must be as much a focus as developing their reading skills.

3. Mathematics:

Elementary students enter school with an informal knowledge about mathematics. This prior knowledge provides the basis for Math instruction. Math teachers allow students to construct their own knowledge by presenting a word problem and challenging the students to solve it. Each Math classroom is equipped with a wide variety of math tools and the children may use whatever they need to do the work. To solve the problem, they might choose to use plastic cubes, draw a picture, use tally marks, or their knowledge of number facts. The students are always asked to explain and justify their strategies. Effective questioning techniques during discussion promotes teacher- to- student and student- to- student interactions. The teacher honors and then uses the students’ different approaches to identify any breakdown in understanding and to guide instruction. Additionally, students record notes, strategies, and their own thoughts and justifications in a math journal. The teachers use a variety of instructional formats such as groups, individual exploration, peer tutors, and projects.

Teachers individualize instruction by allowing students to choose from a selection of “just right numbers” to plug into their problems. These numbers are carefully selected by the teacher to reach all ability levels of the students. Once the children have solved the problem one way they use a different strategy to check the work and might move up to the next level of “just right numbers.” Additionally, because of the positive working environment in the room the teacher can easily monitor the room and provide assistance when needed. Children have a “center day” each week with two teachers present. One teacher works with those students who need more practice and the other works with those who need to be challenged. These groups are flexible, depending on the child’s skill level.

The staff believes that students who are allowed to struggle and who develop their own strategies to solve math problems develop critical thinking skills, thoroughly understand the fundamentals of math, and seem to enjoy math.

As stated earlier, the staff is moving away from traditional textbooks and creating curriculum to teach the standards and meet the needs of the students. Resources by Marilyn Burns and Kathy Richardson are widely used.

4. Additional Curriculum Area:

Many children do not have the physiological and neurological readiness skills necessary for success in school. Because of this, St. Joseph School utilizes the S.M.A.R. T. Curriculum. The Stimulating Maturity through Accelerated Readiness Training Curriculum is a multi-sensory approach to learning, created to develop the readiness skills children necessary to be successful readers. The program consists of activities for developing student's large and fine muscle skills, visual perception, and eye-hand coordination. This is a multi-sensory approach to learning based on brain research. The activities stimulate the brain and make it ready to work.

The S.M.A.R.T. Room is set up as an obstacle course and utilizes a variety of equipment including gym mats, Creep Tracks, an overhead ladder, a rebounder, and a balance beam. Students in grades k-2 complete the obstacle course at least once daily. The program also has a multitude of activities that can be done in the classroom. The classroom activities concentrate on balance, fine motor, auditory, visual and following directions. The students especially enjoy spinning. This activity affects the same area of the brain that drugs administered to control hyperactivity are designed to control. Teachers find this activity especially beneficial prior to seat work.

5. Instructional Methods:

The staff strives each day to create a Christ-centered environment where children feel loved, safe and secure. Working in this climate allows children to be risk-takers, critical thinkers, and problem solvers.

The ultimate goal is to ensure each child reaches their greatest potential and becomes all God expects them to be.

The teachers plan exciting and motivating lessons to cover the South Dakota State Standards. Lessons are designed to address all learning styles and meet the individual needs of all students. Instruction involves a variety of formats which include independent work, group work, whole-class instruction, and many projects. The standards covered each day are stated on the board. This way the children are always aware of the expectations for learning.

Assessment is on-going and students are given individual help when needed. Teachers have the opportunity to have an aide teach enrichment activities to part of the class while they work with the struggling students. Teachers rely on each other to share innovative techniques and provide parents with practical strategies for working with children at home.

Technology is a vital to differentiation. Each classroom is equipped with a SMART board, an interactive electronic board, which allows instructors to better address the many different learning styles. Computer programs such as, Fast Forward, Star fall, IXL, and Reading Counts are also utilized.

St. Joseph School works closely with Pierre Public Schools. First graders have the opportunity to participate in the Reading Recovery Program provided through Title Funding. Public school teachers provide services to the special needs children at St. Joseph School.

6. Professional Development:

Professional development is based on the instructional needs, determined by the annual assessment, and the needs and interests of individual teachers. Each fall the staff reviews the Dakota STEP data and identifies the weakest standards. Committees are then formed to research proven techniques which can be

implemented to ensure that all students are proficient. The committees gather the necessary resources and provide the necessary professional development throughout the year to all teachers. Outside speakers are brought in when needed.

The principal is proactive in researching professional development opportunities provided by the South Dakota Department of Education, TIE, Bureau of Education, and other organizations and providing funds for registration fees and travel expenses. Teachers are encouraged to attend based on the subjects they teach, interests, and professional needs. These same teachers are then required to prepare a presentation for the rest of the staff. Two staff members recently participated in South Dakota Counts, an intensive math initiative. The other staff members are now required to observe in their classrooms, reflect on the observation, collaborate with the SD Counts teachers and set goals to ensure their own lessons are inquiry-based. Once these teachers feel comfortable with this approach to teaching math the South Dakota Counts teacher leaders will observe the lessons of other teachers and collaboration will continue. Classroom observations outside of our school are also arranged as needed.

Collaboration is the key to effective teaching. Teachers are given sharing time at regular staff meetings whenever possible.

Teachers cannot give what they do not have. Therefore, the entire staff participates in a spiritual retreat once a year and studies an aspect of the Catechism monthly.

7. School Leadership:

The principal is a spiritual leader who nurtures the spiritual growth of both students and staff and ensures that Christ's presence is felt throughout the building each and every day. This is done by articulating and living out the school's mission and vision. The principal sets high expectations for student and teacher behavior. The students are constantly referred to as Kids of Christ and the teachers are encouraged to see and treat each student as a unique child of God. Service to others is a constant focus and a priority.

The principal is a strong educational leader who is constantly learning through professional development opportunities, collaboration with other school leaders and reading professional materials. She strives to have a knowledge of current research in curriculum, instruction and assessment. She diligently works to create a community of learners where students and teachers are being challenged to reach their greatest potential; providing for the needs of the teachers; and ensuring that all state guidelines are met.

The principal is constantly looking for ways to improve the school. The staff meets annually to brainstorm the school's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and greatest threats. An action plan is developed, committees are formed, and the work begins to ensure academic excellence for all students. The principal realizes that students must be technology literate and recently acquired funding to purchase thirty-two computers, a SMART board for every classroom, and to hire a part-time technology teacher.

Families and parish members feel welcome at the school. The school maintains an open-door policy, welcomes parents to eat school lunch and has an active parent organization. The staff, led by the principal, participates in the functions sponsored by the parent organization. In the past, parents have been invited to a brown bag lunch with the principal to discuss the school and provide their input. Additionally, a small group of students attend a monthly forum with the principal to discuss the many aspects of the school and offer suggestions. The principal believes when students and parents are given a voice they assume ownership of the school.

PART VI - PRIVATE SCHOOL ADDENDUM

1. Private school association: Catholic

2. Does the school have nonprofit, tax-exempt (501(c)(3) status? Yes

3. What are the 2012-2013 tuition rates, by grade? (Do not include room, board, or fees.)

K	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
<u>\$1670</u>	<u>\$1670</u>	<u>\$1670</u>	<u>\$1670</u>	<u>\$1670</u>	<u>\$1670</u>
6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th
<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>
12th	Other				
<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>				

4. What is the educational cost per student? (School budget divided by enrollment) \$3817

5. What is the average financial aid per student? \$84

6. What percentage of the annual budget is devoted to scholarship assistance and/or tuition reduction?
2%

7. What percentage of the student body receives scholarship assistance, including tuition reduction? 13%

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 3 Test: Dakota STEP

Edition/Publication Year: 2012 Publisher: Pearson

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Proficient and Advanced	86	100	86	89	85
Advanced	23	50	23	11	9
Number of students tested	22	24	22	28	34
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Proficient and Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
2. African American Students					
Proficient and Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Proficient and Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Proficient and Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
Proficient and Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Proficient and Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					
No subgroup had ten children in it.					

13PV126

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 3 Test: Dakota STEP

Edition/Publication Year: 2012 Publisher: Pearson

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Proficient and Advanced	91	96	100	100	100
Advanced	41	54	32	57	21
Number of students tested	22	24	22	28	34
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	21
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Proficient and Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
2. African American Students					
Proficient and Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Proficient and Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Proficient and Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
Proficient and Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Proficient and Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					
No subgroup had ten children in it.					

13PV126

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 4 Test: Dakota STEP

Edition/Publication Year: 2012 Publisher: Pearson

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Proficient and Advanced	100	96	100	87	100
Advanced	55	50	29	5	5
Number of students tested	22	24	28	37	26
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Proficient and Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
2. African American Students					
Proficient and Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Proficient and Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Proficient and Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
Proficient and Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Proficient and Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					
No subgroup had ten children in it.					

13PV126

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 4 Test: Dakota STEP

Edition/Publication Year: 2012 Publisher: Pearson

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Proficient and Advanced	100	92	96	89	95
Advanced	46	46	50	35	65
Number of students tested	22	24	28	37	20
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Proficient and Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
2. African American Students					
Proficient and Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Proficient and Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Proficient and Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
Proficient and Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Proficient and Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					
No subgroup had ten children in it.					

13PV126

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 5 Test: Dakota STEP

Edition/Publication Year: 2012 Publisher: Pearson

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Proficient and Advanced	96	97	86	100	84
Advanced	44	33	14	25	4
Number of students tested	23	30	36	20	25
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Proficient and Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
2. African American Students					
Proficient and Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Proficient and Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Proficient and Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
Proficient and Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Proficient and Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					
No subgroup had ten children in it.					

13PV126

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 5 Test: Dakota STEP

Edition/Publication Year: 2012 Publisher: Pearson

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Proficient and Advanced	83	97	89	100	100
Advanced	48	43	29	60	48
Number of students tested	23	30	36	20	25
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Proficient and Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
2. African American Students					
Proficient and Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Proficient and Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Proficient and Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
Proficient and Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Proficient and Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					
No subgroup had ten children in it.					

13PV126